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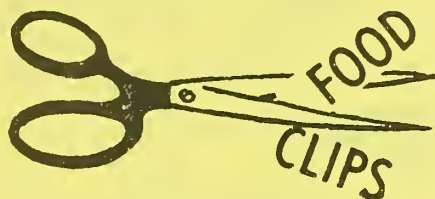
# Food and Home Notes

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The lamb breast contains the rib bones and breast bone and is an economical cut of beef...but is usually less tender than most cuts. Often this cut is boned and rolled for stuffing, according to USDA home economists.

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A loin lamb chop may be identified by the T-bone. It is usually tasty and tender.

\* \* \*

A leg of lamb, french style, means a small amount of meat is trimmed from the end of the shank and the exposed bone can be decorated after roasting. An American-style cut means the shank bone has been removed and the meat is folded back into a pocket on the inside.

\* \* \*

Red and pink beans are the two types of dry beans that are related to the kidney bean. Both are used in Mexican dishes and chili. Pink beans have a more delicate flavor than red beans.

\* \* \*

## FOR YOUR HOLIDAY FIREPLACE

### — FREE FIREWOOD!

Did you know that firewood is available free from the National Forest lands? There are no restrictions on who may gather firewood, but----a permit is required, according to the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

How do you get the wood? Contact the Forest Service District Ranger's Office\* to obtain a "Free Use Permit" which will specify where to cut, which trees may be harvested, and how much may be removed. It will also give the rules and regulations applicable to that area.

Usually, material that is available for use as firewood is from dead trees, tops from logging operations, or other wood lying on the ground. In some circumstances, other trees are also given away free--but, only at the discretion of the local District Ranger. Cutting and hauling the wood must be done by the permit holder.

\* Listed in your telephone directory under U.S. Government; Department of Agriculture; Forest Service.

## STEPS IN CONDITIONING GREENS

1. Be sure all containers to be used are clean. Wash with soap and water. If it will not harm the finish, soak container five minutes in a solution of 1 part liquid bleach (which contains sodium hypochloride) and 9 parts water, rinse with clear water.
2. Cut  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches off the bottom of the stem. A fresh cut will absorb more water. A clean, sharp knife or pair of shears may be used to make a sharp cut. Remove the foliage from the bottom 2 inches of the branch.
3. Place the stems in water (110°F) which contains a floral preservative. The water should feel warm when a drop is placed on the wrist, but not burn. Stems can absorb warm water faster than cool water. Floral preservatives contain acidifiers which slow down bacterial growth, fungicides to control fungal growth and sugar to feed the leaves. The entire stem does not need to be in water but the bottom 2 to 3 inches should be in water. The stems may be close enough to support each other but not so tightly packed that they are smashing each other.
4. Cover the branches with a large plastic bag being sure not to smash them or pack them too tightly. This will increase the humidity around the greens and help prevent loss of water.
5. Place the greens in a cool area for at least 2 hours to allow them to absorb water. If you do not have a cool basement or room, placing the greens on the floor, out of direct sun will help.





## DECORATING THE HOME

## .....FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Creative and inexpensive ideas can be developed from cut-offs of evergreens, according to Cooperative Extension Horticulture agents, Pamela Marshall and Elizabeth Crowley at the University of the District of Columbia.

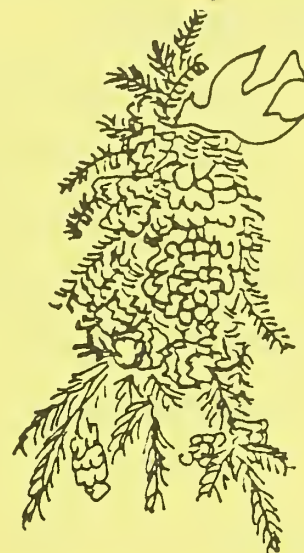
Narrow-leafed evergreens that are suitable for use in wreaths, door swags, and centerpieces would include firs, pines, cedars, evergreen cypress, junipers, yews, and Arbor-Vitae. Spruce and hemlock trees however shed their needles quickly, therefore, are not practical to use for holiday arrangements.

Cut the greens when they contain a maximum amount of water, such as a few days after a soft rain on a mild windless day. If greens are picked when they are frozen, the stems will not absorb water as fast as they will when they are not frozen. If greens are dirty they can be washed in soapy water, rinsed then "conditioned." (Conditioning" greens is similar to "crisping lettuce." It is a process that allows the plant material to absorb as much water as it can--See page 2).

Many other creative decorations can be made for the home by using basic greens, but the secret of keeping them in good condition for the holidays is this conditioning process. It will be effective on all your live greenery from Christmas wreaths, door swags, and centerpieces.

Cones, Christmas balls or bells, fruits, and clusters of berries may be added after your evergreen pieces are tied or grouped in the shape you desire.

Keep the decorations in a cool place until you're ready to display them.



## HOLIDAY MEALS

## — AND FOOD SAFETY

Food Safety "rules" are worth remembering, according to Dr. Evelyn Spindler, Extension Service nutritionist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Preventing food borne illness should be a top priority for all homemakers preparing for holiday meals.

Salmonella is bacteria found in raw meat, fish, poultry and eggs---and it's even carried by dirty hands. Staphylococcus is a bacteria that often comes from sneezes, coughs and unwashed hands. Staphylococcus forms a toxin in hams, custard-filled foods, cream pies, unrefrigerated cooked meat, and dairy products.

## — Tips to remember —

1. Never place other foods on a surface where you have had raw meat or poultry until you have thoroughly cleaned it.
2. Remove stubborn bacteria from cutting boards by scrubbing boards with soap and hot water, rinsing, applying chlorine bleach and rinsing thoroughly again.
3. Refrigerate cream, custard, meringue pies, and other foods with custard fillings.
4. Roasting a turkey? Cook it completely to an internal temperature of 185°F. Preparing stuffing? Stuff it in the bird immediately and bake. Be sure the stuffing temperature reaches 165°F. Or--you may prefer to bake the stuffing in a separate dish.
5. Keep hot foods HOT (above 140°F) and cold foods COLD (below 40°F).

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**it's  
good  
food  
-keep it safe**